

## Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Summer Food Service Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) SFSP meal patterns require one serving of the grains/breads component at breakfast, lunch, and supper. One serving of the grains/breads component may be offered as one of the two required snack components.

For information on the SFSP meal patterns and the grains/breads component, review the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resource, [Requirements for the Grains/Breads Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns](#), and visit the “[SFSP Meal Patterns](#)” and “[Meat/Meat Alternates Component for the SFSP](#)” sections of the CSDE's SFSP webpage.



Breakfast cereals credit as the grains/breads component in SFSP meals and snacks. “Breakfast cereals” are defined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations (21 CFR 170.3(n)(4)). They include ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals (such as puffed cereals, round or flaked cereals, and granola) and instant and regular hot cereals (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). RTE breakfast cereals are a type of breakfast cereal that can be eaten as sold. They are typically fortified with vitamins and minerals.

To credit as the grains/breads component in the SFSP meal patterns, breakfast cereals must meet the two criteria below.

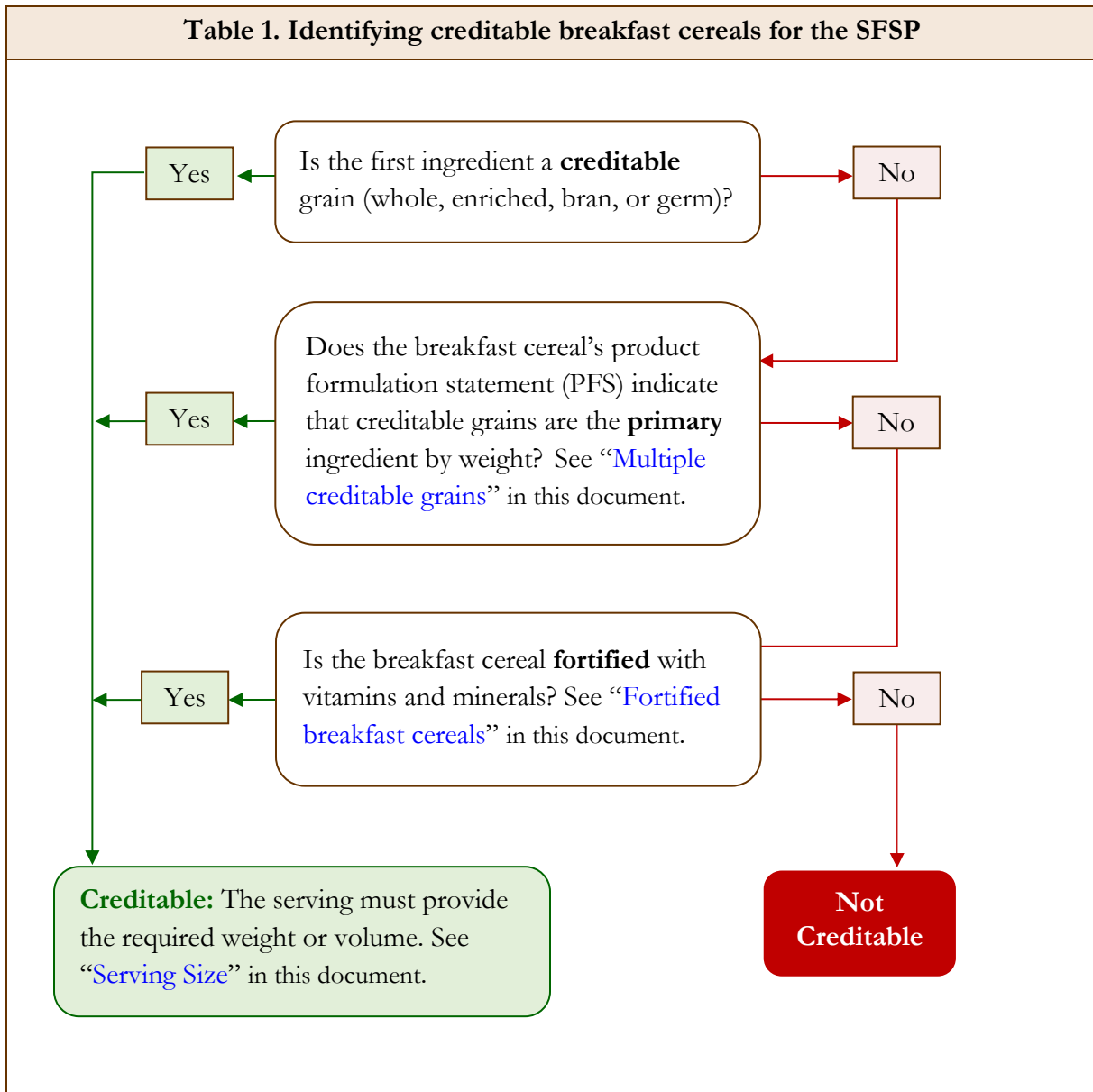
1. A creditable grain must be the first ingredient or the cereal must be fortified. Creditable grains for the SFSP include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.
2. The serving must provide the minimum required volume or weight.



Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels such as wheat berries, and hard chunks (such as granola) may be choking hazards for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what types of breakfast cereals to offer in SFSP menus. This consideration is also important for children with a disability that requires dietary restrictions. For additional guidance, visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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Table 1 summarizes the steps for determining if breakfast cereals credit as the grains/breads component in the SFSP meal patterns.



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## Creditable Grains

Creditable grains for the SFSP meal patterns include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. To credit as the grains/breads component, breakfast cereals must contain a creditable grain as the first ingredient or be fortified. SFSP sponsors must check the ingredients statement to determine if breakfast cereals meet at least one of these crediting criteria.

### Whole-grain breakfast cereals

Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel (starchy endosperm, fiber-rich bran, and nutrient-rich germ) after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. A 100 percent whole-grain cereal lists a whole grain as the first ingredient and contains only whole grains. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a whole-grain breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: *Whole-grain rolled oats*, sugar, natural flavors, salt.

For more information on identifying whole grains, review CSDE's handout, [\*Crediting Whole Grains in the SFSP\*](#).

### Enriched breakfast cereals

Enriched breakfast cereals contain five vitamins and minerals added in amounts required by the FDA to replace some of the nutrients lost during processing. The enrichment nutrients include thiamin (vitamin B<sub>1</sub>, thiamin mononitrate, or thiamin hydrochloride); riboflavin (vitamin B<sub>2</sub>); niacin (vitamin B<sub>3</sub> or niacinamide); folic acid (folate); and iron (reduced iron, ferrous sulfate, or ferric orthophosphate). A breakfast cereal is enriched if the food is labeled as “enriched” or an enriched grain is the first ingredient. The ingredients statement below shows an example of an enriched breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: Puffed rice, *ferrous sulfate (a source of iron)*, *niacinamide*, citric acid, *thiamin mononitrate*, *riboflavin*, *folic acid*.

For more information on identifying enriched grains, review the CSDE's resource, [\*Crediting Enriched Grains in the SFSP\*](#).

### Fortified breakfast cereals

Fortified breakfast cereals have nutrients added by the manufacturer that were not originally present, or that are at higher levels than originally present. Manufacturers may choose which additional nutrients to use for fortification. Fortified breakfast cereals typically contain the five enrichment nutrients plus other vitamins and minerals that do not exist naturally in grains.

Different cereal brands may list different fortification nutrients. The USDA does not specify a minimum number of nutrients or a minimum percentage for the level of fortification for breakfast cereals in Child Nutrition Programs. If a breakfast cereal is fortified, it does not need to be enriched.

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A breakfast cereal is fortified if the food is labeled as “fortified” or the ingredients statement lists the vitamins and minerals added to the product. These nutrients are typically listed after “Vitamins and Minerals.” The ingredients statements below show some examples of fortified breakfast cereals.

- Ingredients: Whole-grain wheat, raisins, wheat bran, sugar, brown sugar syrup, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. **Vitamins and Minerals:** *Potassium chloride, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (pyridoxine hydrochloride), zinc oxide, vitamin B<sub>2</sub> (riboflavin), vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>.*
- Ingredients: Milled corn, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** *Iron, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate, ascorbic acid), niacinamide, vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B<sub>2</sub> (riboflavin), vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>.*

If the ingredients statement does not list any vitamins and minerals, the breakfast cereal is not fortified. To credit as the grains/breads component in the SFSP meal patterns, breakfast cereals that are not fortified must contain a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) as the first ingredient or the greatest ingredient by weight. If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the breakfast cereal contains more than one creditable grain, the SFSP sponsor must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer stating the weight of all creditable grains.

### Bran and germ

Bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran) is the seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Germ (such as wheat germ) is the vitamin-rich embryo of the grain kernel. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a creditable RTE breakfast cereal that contains wheat bran as the first ingredient.

- Ingredients: *Wheat bran*, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** *Calcium carbonate, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate and ascorbic acid), reduced iron, niacinamide, vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B<sub>2</sub> (riboflavin), folic acid, vitamin B<sub>1</sub> (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, vitamin D.*



### Multiple creditable grains

If a breakfast cereal is not fortified and a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the product contains more than one creditable grain, the SFSP sponsor must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer stating the weight of all creditable grains. The PFS must document that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight in the breakfast cereal. For information on PFS forms, review the CSDE’s resources, [Product Formulation Statements](#) and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP](#), the USDA’s PFS form, [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings](#), and the USDA’s handout, [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement](#).

# Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the SFSP

## Serving Size

The USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*, summarizes the grain servings and ounce equivalents for nine groups (A-I) of creditable grain foods. Cooked breakfast cereals (regular and instant) are in group H and cold RTE breakfast cereals are in group I.

The Exhibit A requirements are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs. The CSDE's handout, *Servings for Grains/Breads in the SFSP*, lists the Exhibit A grains/breads servings that apply to the SFSP meal patterns.

- **Group H (cereal grains):** Cereal grains (such as oats, buckwheat, farina, and quinoa) require  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked or 25 grams dry to credit as one serving of the grains/breads component. Cereal grains typically credit based on the cooked serving, but menu planners may choose to use the dry uncooked weight.
- **Group I (RTE breakfast cereals):** RTE breakfast cereals require 1 ounce (28 grams) or  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (whichever is less) to credit as one serving of the grains/breads component. If the appropriate volume of cereal weighs less than 28 grams, it still credits as one serving. For example,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of cereal that weighs 26 grams credits as one serving.



## Nutrition Guidance

Whole-grain, low-sugar cereals provide the best nutrition, and should be served most often. Many breakfast cereals contain added sugars and refined grains. The CSDE encourages SFSP sponsors to read labels and choose whole-grain, low-sugar breakfast cereals. For guidance on identifying whole grains, review the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the SFSP*. For guidance on choosing low-sugar breakfast cereals, visit the USDA's [Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar](#) webpage.

## Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the SFSP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/AcceptDocumentationSFSP.pdf>.

Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings in the SFSP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/GrainCalculationSFSP.pdf>

## Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the SFSP

Choose Breakfast Cereals that are Lower in Sugar (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/choose-breakfast-cereals-are-lower-sugar>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the SFSP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/CreditEnrichedGrainsSFSP.pdf>

Crediting Foods in the SFSP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents>

Crediting Whole Grains in the SFSP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/CreditWholeGrainsSFSP.pdf>

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Grains/Breads Component for the SFSP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents#GrainsBreads>

Meal Patterns for the SFSP (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program#MealPatterns>

Nutrition Guide: Summer Food Service Program (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA\\_SFSP\\_NutritionGuide.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA_SFSP_NutritionGuide.pdf)

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Document\\_Grains\\_Breads\\_Servings.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf)

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/PFS.pdf>

Requirements for the Grains/Breads Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/ComponentGrainsBreadsSFSP.pdf>

Resources for the SFSP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/ResourcesSFSPMealPattern.pdf>

Servings for Grains/Breads in the SFSP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/ServingsGrainsBreadsSFSP.pdf>

## Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the SFSP



For more information, visit the [SFSP Meal Patterns](#) and [Crediting Foods in the SFSP](#) sections of the CSDE's SFSP webpage, or contact the [Summer Meals staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/CreditCerealsSFSP.pdf>.

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